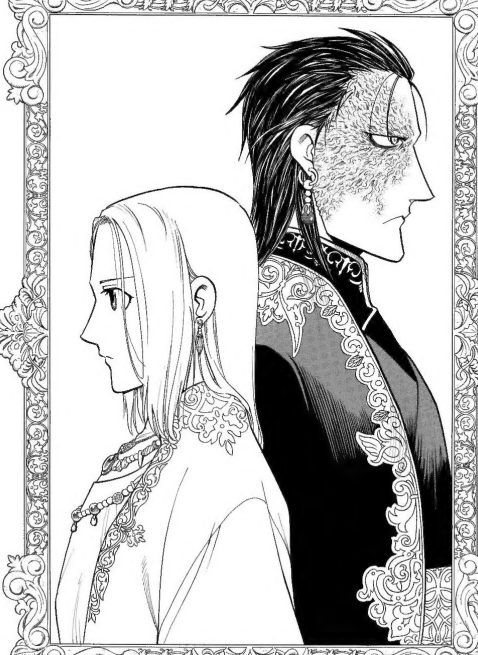
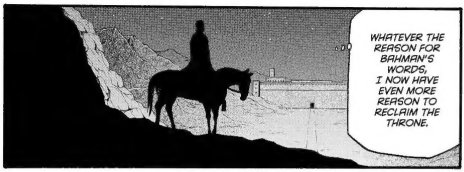
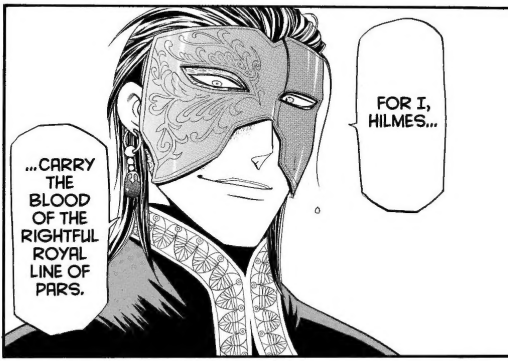


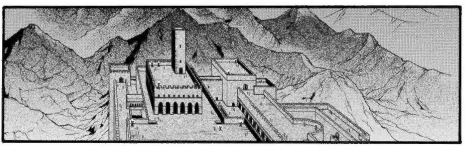
FIND HIM!
HE CAN'T HAVE GONE FAR!

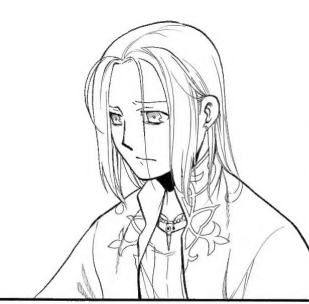
HE SHOULD HAVE FALLEN IN AROUND HERE.
IS THERE ANYTHING FLOATING IN THE WATER THAT COULD BE A CLUE?

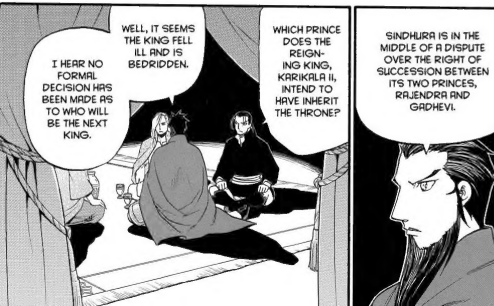
IF YOU KILL THAT MAN, THE RIGHTFUL ROYAL LINE OF PARS WILL BE EXTINGUISHED!!
HE MAY BE A USURPER, BUT ANDRAGORAS IS THE YOUNGER BROTHER OF MY FATHER, OSROES V...
NO, WAIT.
IS IT POSSIBLE THAT ANDRAGORAS WAS NEVER A TRUE MEMBER OF THE PARSIAN ROYAL FAMILY?
BAHMAN'S WORDING...
I CARRY THE BLOOD OF THE RIGHTFUL ROYAL LINE. THAT IS INDISPUTABLE. DID HE MEAN... THAT DAMN ARSLAN DOES NOT CARRY THE BLOOD OF THE RIGHTFUL ROYAL LINE...?


WHATEVER THE REASON FOR BAHMAN'S WORDS, I NOW HAVE EVEN MORE REASON TO RECLAIM THE THRONE.


FOR I, HILMES,...
...CARRY THE BLOOD OF THE RIGHTFUL ROYAL LINE OF PARS.






SINDHURA IS IN THE MIDDLE OF A DISPUTE OVER THE RIGHT OF SUCCESSION BETWEEN ITS TWO PRINCES, RAJENDRA AND GADHEVI.
WHICH PRINCE DOES THE REIGNING KING, KARIKALA II, INTEND TO HAVE INHERIT THE THRONE?
WELL, IT SEEMS THE KING FELL ILL AND IS BEDRIDDEN.
I HEAR NO FORMAL DECISION HAS BEEN MADE AS TO WHO WILL BE THE NEXT KING.

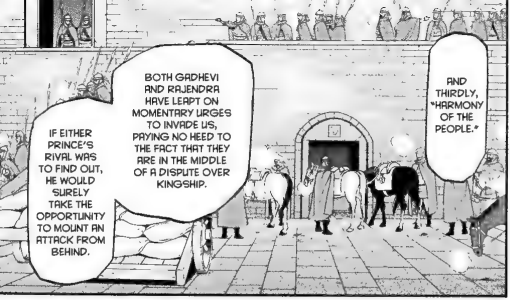
THE TWO PRINCES ARE HALF-BROTHERS. GADHEVI IS OLDER.
HIS MOTHER IS FROM A HIGHER STATION AS WELL, AND HE HAS THE SUPPORT OF THE RULING CLANS.
IF THERE IS NO FOUL PLAY, IT IS LIKELY THAT THE OLDER SON GADHEVI WILL BE CROWNED KING.
AND RAJENDRRA?
ACCORDING TO THOSE WHO BACK GADHEVI...
...RAJENDRA IS THE SORT OF MAN WHO WOULD SMILE POLITELY WHILE SLITTING HIS ADVERSARY'S THROAT.
BUT HE IS GENEROUS AND CHARMING, WHICH HAS GAINED HIM IMMENSE POPULARITY WITH THE LOW-RANKED SOLDIERS AND THE IMPOVERISHED PUBLIC.
HE HAS GATHERED TOGETHER THOSE WHO OPPOSE GADHEVI AND HAS A CONSIDERABLE MILITARY FORCE.
SPLIT THE TROOPS INTO THREE GROUPS.
LORD BAHMAN IS IMMOBILE RIGHT NOW.
SO THIS IS AN ATTEMPT TO EXPAND HIS TERRITORY AND GAIN AN EDGE IN THE FIGHT OVER THE RIGHT OF SUCCESSION.
16

I AM HERE.
THE RIGHT OF SUC-CES-SION, HMM...
YOUR HIGH-NESS...
YOUR HIGH-NESS!

FOR NOW, WE MUST CONCEN-TRATE ON THE ENEMY AT HAND.
YES, YOUR HIGH-NESS!
AS YOU WISH!

...WHERE IS BAHMAN?
I'M AFRAID HE IS IN NO CONDITION TO SPEAK.
I BELIEVE IT IS BETTER TO KEEP HIM HERE IN THE FORTRESS FOR THIS BATTLE.
I SEE...
THAT WE HAVE LOST SUCH A MAN OF HIS EXPERIENCE AT THIS TIME, WHEN WE MUST BATTLE THE SINDHURANS, IS A SEVERE BLOW.
DO NOT FRET, YOUR HIGHNESS. THE SINDHURAN ARMY WILL FAIL.
"THEY WILL FAIL"? NOT, "WE WILL BE VICTORIOUS"?
AH, PRECISELY! THERE ARE THREE REASONS THAT THE SINDHURAN ARMY WILL FAIL.
WHAT ARE THEY?
DARYUN, YOU ONCE SOJOURNED IN SERICA, THE KINGDOM OF SILK, YES?
I DID.
AND THERE YOU LEARNED THE THREE PRINCIPLES ONE MUST BE MINDFUL OF IN WAR, DID YOU NOT?

IN THIS CAMPAIGN, THE SINDHURAN ARMY IS VIOLATING ALL THREE OF THESE PRINCIPLES.
YOUR HIGHNESS.
PRECISELY.
"THE TIME OF THE HEAVENS."
"ADVANTAGES OF THE EARTH."
AND "HARMONY OF THE PEOPLE."
THUS, THEY HAVE VIOLATED THE PRINCIPLE OF "THE TIME OF THE HEAVENS."
MOREOVER, THE WAR ELEPHANTS THAT THE SINDHURAN ARMY BORSTS OF ARE WEAK TO COLD, AND SO THEIR TRUE VALUE CANNOT BE BROUGHT FORTH.
SINDHURA IS A SOUTHERN KINGDOM, AND HER SOLDIER'S ARE ACCUSTOMED TO HEAT. THIS IS A DIFFICULT SEASON FOR THEM.
IT IS WINTER NOW.
FIRST, "THE IME OF THE HEAVENS."
THEY SURELY INTEND TO AMBUSH US BEFORE DAYBREAK, BUT FOR ONES WHO ARE UNFAMILIAR WITH THE LAY OF THE LAND, THIS PLAN IS NOTHING IF NOT FOOLHARDY.
THE SINDHURAN ARMY HAS CROSSED OVER OUR BORDER, AND WHAT'S MORE, THEY ARE MAKING THEIR MOVE IN THE NIGHT.
SECONDLY, "ADVANTAGES OF THE EARTH."


IF EITHER PRINCE'S RIVAL WAS TO FIND OUT, HE WOULD SURELY TAKE THE OPPORTUNITY TO MOUNT AN ATTACK FROM BEHIND.
BOTH GADHEVI AND RAJENDRA HAVE LEAPT ON MOMENTARY URGES TO INVADE US, PAYING NO HEED TO THE FACT THAT THEY ARE IN THE MIDDLE OF A DISPUTE OVER KINGSHIP.
AND THIRDLY, "HARMONY OF THE PEOPLE."

WE WILL DEFEAT THIS SINDHURAN ARMY FOR YOUR HIGHNESS, AND WHILE WE ARE AT IT, SECURE STABILITY ON THE EASTERN BORDER FOR THE NEXT TWO OR PERHAPS THREE YEARS.

AS LONG AS THE SINDHURAN ARMY IS WEIGHED DOWN BY THESE DANGERS, EVEN IF THEY ARE A LARGE AND POWERFUL FORCE, THERE IS NO NEED FOR US TO FEAR THEM.

DAK
DAK
DAK
DAK
DAK
THE FORCE SENT BY GHADEVI THAT WE CHASED AWAY THE OTHER DAY WAS 5,000 MEN STRONG.
NOW, WHICH PRINCE IS ON THE ATTACK, AND HOW LARGE OF AN ARMY DID HE BRING?
I HAVE A GUESS OF IT.
WE CONFIRMED THE INSIGNIA ON THE ENEMY'S BANNERS!

PRINCE RAJENDRA IS COMMANDING THE ARMY HIMSELF.
HE BRINGS WITH HIM ABOUT 50,000 MEN.

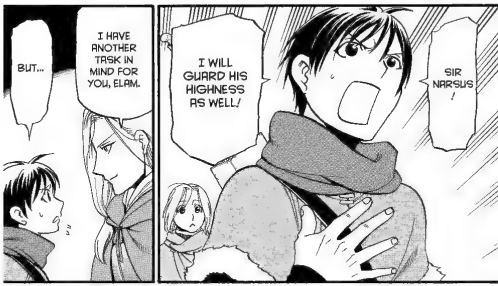
ALL RIGHT. EVERYTHING'S IN GOOD ORDER

DARYUN, I WOULD HAVE YOU CAPTURE PRINCE RAJENDRA FOR US— ALIVE.
I ACCEPT THE TASK.
NOW THEN...
...IT IS TIME WE WENT TO RESCUE PRINCE RAJENDRA.
?

I'D LIKE TO BORROW 500 HORSE-MEN...
...AND ONE GUIDE WHO KNOWS THE LAY OF THE LAND.
THEY'RE ALL YOURS.
TAKE THEM FROM MY OWN MEN.

ARE YOU SURE YOU ONLY WANT 500?
IT IS PLENTY.
GIEVE/ FARRANGIS!

I ENTRUST HIS HIGHNESS'S SAFETY TO YOU.
UNDERSTOOD.


SIR NARSUS!
I WILL GUARD HIS HIGHNESS AS WELL!
I HAVE ANOTHER TASK IN MIND FOR YOU, ELAM.
BUT...

NARSUS!♡
IF IT'S SOMETHING ELAM CAN DO, THEN I CAN DO IT, TOO!
SHALL I TAKE HIS PLACE?

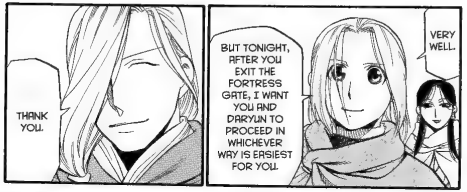
YOU WANT ME TO DECIDE /?
WHAT SHALL I DO?
OH, PIPE DOWN! I'M TALKING TO NARSUS, NOT YOU!
YOU STAY OUT OF THIS!

NARSUS IS GIVING YOU THIS TASK BECAUSE HE TRUSTS YOU WITH IT. I TRUST NARSUS' JUDGMENT AS WELL.
ELAM.
HRMMM...

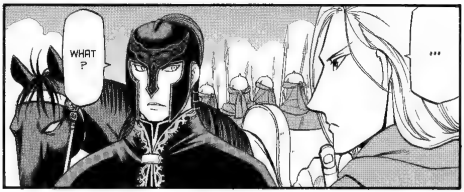
I AM THE ONE WHO SAID I WANTED TO BE ALONE, EARLIER.
DO NOT FRET OVER ME.
...IT IS...
NARSUS ALWAYS CHOOSES THE VERY BEST PEOPLE FOR THE VERY BEST PLANS.
IS THAT NOT SO?

OH, GREAT! JUST WHEN I THOUGHT I COULD DO SOMETHING USEFUL FOR NARSUS!
YOU GO AND WAIT QUIETLY IN YOUR ROOM!
...
...YES, YOUR HIGH-NESS!
NOW, NOW. YOU CAN BOTH DIVIDE THE WORK BETWEEN YOU.
むーっ
GRRR!
I HAVE NO OBJECTIONS WITH ANYTHING YOU DECIDE ON, NARSUS.
YOUR HIGHNESS, I WOULD ASK YOU FOR YOUR PERMISSION AS WELL.
THIS IS THE PLAN.
MHM.
MHM...
AH, THAT WILL NOT DO.
YOU NEED NOT ASK FOR MY LEAVE FOR EACH AND EVERY THING.

EVEN IF IT IS TEDIOUS, I WILL CONTINUE TO ASK YOUR LEAVE FOR EACH AND EVERY THING.
IT IS MY ROLE TO DEVISE STRATEGIES. HOWEVER, IT IS YOUR HIGHNESS' RESPONSIBILITY TO JUDGE AND DECIDE ON THEM.


THANK YOU.
BUT TONIGHT, AFTER YOU EXIT THE FORTRESS GATE, I WANT YOU AND DARYUN TO PROCEED IN WHICHEVER WAY IS EASIEST FOR YOU.
VERY WELL.

ARE WE RIDING OUT YET?
NARSUS! THE PREPARATIONS ARE FINISHED!
CLAMOR
CLAMOR
CLAMOR
CLAMOR
CLAMOR
CLAMOR
WHINNY


WHAT?
...

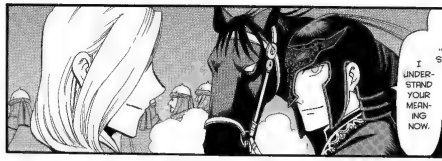
NO MATTER WHAT CIRCUMSTANCES OR SECRETS THERE ARE, HIS HIGHNESS ARSLAN IS MY LIEGE.
IF IT TURNS OUT THAT HIS HIGHNESS ARSLAN DOES NOT HAVE THE BLOOD OF THE RIGHTFUL ROYAL LINE, WHAT WILL YOU DO?
NOW, THIS QUESTION IS STRICTLY HYPOTHETICAL, MIND YOU.

TOO TRUE.
I NEEDN'T HAVE EVEN ASKED YOU.
IT GOES WITHOUT SAYING THAT HIS HIGHNESS HAS NO PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR THOSE CIRCUMSTANCES OR SECRETS.
TELL ME, IF YOU LIKE.
WHAT ABOUT YOU, NARSUS? YOU ARE DOING MUCH FOR HIS HIGHNESS. HOW WOULD YOU MEASURE HIS ABILITY, IN FULL FRANKNESS?
IT WAS A FRIVOLOUS QUESTION. FORGIVE ME.
...THAT HIS HIGHNESS DOES NOT BECOME JEALOUS OF HIS SUBORDINATES.
I BELIEVE THAT YOU ARE ALREADY AWARE...
IN MY VIEW, HIS HIGHNESS POSSESSES QUALITIES THAT ARE QUITE DIFFICULT FOR A RULER TO OBTAIN.
IT DOESN'T MATTER TO ME.

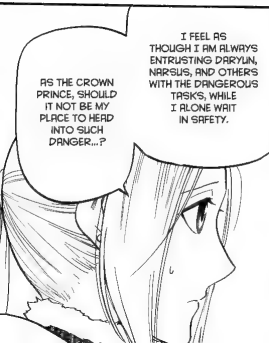
GO ON...
WHEN A RULER IS TOO SELF-ASSURED OF HIS OWN VALOR AND INGENUITY AND SO ON, HE COMES TO HARBOR JEALOUSY FOR HIS SUBORDINATES' TALENTS AND FEATS.
IT LEADS TO DOUBT AND FEAR, AND ENDS WITH KILLING OR OTHERWISE DOING AWAY WITH THEM.
SUCH DARKNESS DOES NOT LURK IN HIS HIGHNESS ARSLAN'S HEART.

YOU MAKE IT SOUND AS THOUGH HIS HIGHNESS BELIEVES HIMSELF TO BE INCOMPETENT, AND THAT THAT IS A GOOD THING...
HA HA
I AM NOT SAYING THAT.

WE ARE, SO TO SPEAK, HORSES.
IF YOU WILL ALLOW ME TO BE SOMEWHAT CONCEITED, WE WOULD LIKELY BE AMONG THE SWIFTEST.
HIS HIGHNESS ARSLAN IS THE RIDER.
HE WHO CAN RIDE THE SWIFTEST HORSES WELL MUST BE ABLE TO KEEP PACE WITH THE HORSES, YES?


...I SEE.
I UNDER-STAND YOUR MEAN-ING NOW.

ドドド
TH-
THUMP


I FEEL AS THOUGH I AM ALWAYS ENTRUSTING DARYUN, NARSUS, AND OTHERS WITH THE DANGEROUS TASKS, WHILE I ALONE WAIT IN SAFETY.
AS THE CROWN PRINCE, SHOULD IT NOT BE MY PLACE TO HEAD INTO SUCH DANGER...?

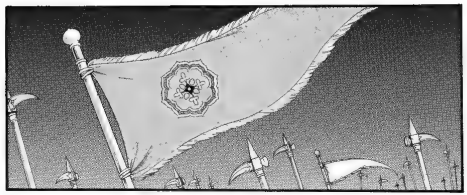
DESPITE WHAT I SAID, I CANNOT HELP BUT BE RESTLESS.
WHAT TROUBLES YOU?

IF NOT, THEN TO WHERE SHOULD LORD NARSUS AND LORD DARYUN AND THE REST RETURN?
YOUR HIGHNESS' PLACE IS HERE.
I AND GIEVE ARE ALSO HERE...
...
...HE'S GONE.

GIEVE!
WHERE WERE YOU?
OH, I JUST HAD A LITTLE CHORE TO TAKE CARE OF.
I WOULD PREFER THAT YOU NOT LEAVE HIS HIGHNESS' SIDE.
ACTUALLY, I POPPED DOWN TO THAT OLD MAN'S CHAMBERS AND HAD MYSELF A LOOK AROUND...
!
YOU WENT IN SEARCH OF THE LETTER FROM THE ERAN, OF WHICH LORD KISHWARD SPOKE?
I THOUGHT IT WOULD BE HIDDEN SOMEWHERE.
ALAS, I DIDN'T FIND IT.
IF THAT LETTER WERE TO FALL INTO THE HANDS OF A DUBIOUS FELLOW, WE COULD HAVE OURSELVES A STICKY SITUATION. THE SOONER WE FIND THIS LETTER, THE BETTER!
"DUBIOUS FELLOW."

THEN I'LL GO BACK TO HIS HIGHNESS.
I AM GOING TO MEET WITH LORD KISHWARD TO DISCUSS THE GUARD ARRANGEMENTS.
WHERE IS HIS HIGHNESS?
ON THE BALCONY.

GH KH KH..
GH GH/
GH/
GH/
GH/
GH/
SLRR
KH KH KH KH KH...



MOVE QUICKLY!
WE WILL ATTACK PESHAWAR BEFORE DAYBREAK!
I, RAJENDRA, WILL ACHIEVE WHAT MY FATHER THE KING AND GADHEVI COULD NOT. I WILL TAKE PESHAWAR!
JOIN ME, MY MEN, IN CARVING OUR NAMES INTO SINDHURAN HISTORY!
おっ
SIR, YES, SIR!
BRR...
I HAD NO IDEA PARS COULD BE THIS COLD
IT'S EVEN CHILLIER BECAUSE WE'VE CROSSED THE RIVER

THRONK
WHIZ
YOU THERE, DON'T BREAK FORMATION!
ENEMY SOLDIERS COULD BE HIDING ANYWHERE, WAITING TO AMBUSH US!
MUOH!
MOOOO...
TUMULT
YOUR HIGHNESS RAJENDRA!
WE HAVE TROUBLE!
CLOP
KER-CLOP
WHAT'S GOING ON BACK THERE?
CLOP
CLOP
CLOP

WHAT?!
PRINCE GADHEVI HAS BROUGHT A GREAT ARMY BEHIND US AND ATTACKED OUR REAR!
PRINCE RAJENDRA OF SINDHURA HAS BEEN TAKEN CAPTIVE BY THE PARSIAN ARMY!
I HAVE AN URGENT MESSAGE FOR HIS HIGHNESS!
WHERE IS HIS HIGHNESS?!
NOW WHAT?!
IMPOS-SIBLE!
HOW COULD HE KNOW THAT I AM HERE?!
COULD IT BE THAT THEY HAVE BEEN WATCHING OUR EVERY MOVE...?!
HUH?

HUH?
HUH?
WH...

HUH ?!
H...
HOW DID THIS HAPPEN ...?!